



State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission on Children



March 1, 2012

Re: Raised Bill 5219

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Urban, and other members of the Select Committee on Children:

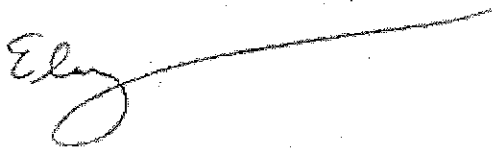
The Commission on Children supports Raised Bill 5219. Young adults need to be included in the annual report card on policies and programs affecting children.

Young adults face a far different economic world than the one their parents entered. Jobs are scarce, and many of the jobs that are available don't pay well enough to guarantee economic independence, let alone security. On January 10, the Commission and the Connecticut Workforce Development Council held a public forum on youth unemployment, and we learned that the problem is far worse than we imagined. For instance, while the overall unemployment rate hovered around 8 percent last summer, it stood at 17.3 percent for those between the ages of 16 and 24. In other words, the youth unemployment rate is twice that of the overall population.

The problem extends not just to young people seeking their first full-time jobs, but to teen-agers simply seeking after-school work. John Twomey, CEO of the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals, told the forum that the teenage labor force participation rate in the U.S. stands at 29.5 percent – the lowest since at least 1948, when tracking began. Mr. Twomey explained the ramifications of this in very blunt terms: "We are sending a whole generation of high school and college graduates into the workplace without any work experience or understanding of what a J-O-B requires."

It's obvious what all this means for the future competitiveness of Connecticut's workforce and maintaining the tax revenues necessary for the caring of an aging population. That's why the Commission believes it's essential that an annual report card on children include indicators of how well our young adults are faring in these challenging times. We stand ready to continue assisting the Committee in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Elaine", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Elaine Zimmerman  
Executive Director  
Connecticut Commission on Children